



**SPS ACTIVITIES OF THE CARIBBEAN AGRICULTURAL HEALTH
AND FOOD SAFETY AGENCY (CAHFSA)**

REPORT TO THE COMMITTEE ON SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

The following communication, received on 26 May 2022, is being circulated at the request of CAHFSA.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA) was established by the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to perform a coordinating and organizing role in the establishment of an effective and efficient regional sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) regime and to execute on behalf of member States such SPS actions and activities that can be more effectively and efficiently executed through a regional mechanism.

1.2. CAHFSA is pleased to provide this report to the eighty-third regular meeting of the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, summarising key activities and providing updates on CARICOM SPS work programme.

1.3. As with most organizations, the COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected the CAHFSA work programme over the past two years, forcing an adjustment in the execution of activities. However, the Agency has managed to improvise innovative ways to progress its work programme and execute its mandate.

2 ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE

2.1. CAHFSA is pleased to announce the appointment of a Food Safety Specialist to its staff complement. With this new addition, the Agency is now better placed to progress its agenda of establishing an effective regime of SPS measures in the CARICOM region.

2.2. As the agricultural landscape within the CARICOM region grows and adapts to meet various SPS challenges and opportunities, CAHFSA recognizes the need to assess its position and strategies continuously. As such, the Agency has recently completed a strategic diagnosis of its operations. The findings and recommendations will be used to develop a new strategic plan and inform the development of a more resilient and effective agency study.

**3 COLLABORATION WITH INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE
AREA OF AGRICULTURAL HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY**

**3.1 Codex Alimentarius Commission, International Plant Protection Convention and the
World Organisation for Animal Health**

3.1. CAHFSA continues its engagement with the OIE, IPPC and the Codex Alimentarius Commission through meeting participation and regional coordination of activities. This includes participating in:

1. The virtual forty-fourth session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission Meeting, which took place on 19-25 November and 1 December 2021;
2. The 16th session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures, which was held virtually on 5, 7 and 21 April 2022;
3. The 89th Annual General Session of the World Assembly of Delegates of the World Organisation for Animal Health, which took place from Monday 23 to Thursday, 26 May 2022.

3.2 Collaboration with Regional Organization

3.2. The United Nations designated 12 May the **International Day of Plant Health (IDPH)** to raise global awareness on how protecting plant health can help end hunger, reduce poverty, protect biodiversity and the environment, and boost economic development. In celebration of this important day, CAHFSA collaborated with the Caribbean Plant Health Directors Forum to organize and deliver a webinar on "The Russia/Ukraine Conflict – Potential Impact And Implications For The Caribbean Region". The webinar held on 13 May 2022 included presentations on the impact and implications of the Russia/Ukraine conflict on global food supply and the Potential Implications of the conflict on the region's agriculture and plant health.

3.3. **World Food Safety Day on 7 June** is an international day declared by the United Nations in 2018 to bring awareness of food safety and the potential SPS barriers to trade among countries. CAHFSA is partnering with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), OIE, the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) and the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) to deliver a regional webinar on 6 June 2022, focusing on how the Caribbean is taking actions to align the region with international food safety standards in line with this year's World Food Safety Day Theme: "Safer Food, Better Health for the Caribbean region".

3.3 Collaboration with the GICSV and the TC-RPPO

3.4. CAHFSA actively supports the international and hemispheric phytosanitary community in coordinated activities to prevent the introduction and spread of plant pests. The Agency continues its collaboration with the Inter-American Coordinating Group in Plant Health (GICSV) and the Technical Cooperation on Regional Plant Protection Organization (TC-RPPO).

3.5. CAHFSA participates in all the GICSV Working Groups, which have been established on relevant topics such as Electronic Certification (ePhyto), Fruitfly, HLB, *Tuta absoluta*, Orthopteros pests (Locust) and FOC TR4. The Agency also attended the 33rd Meeting of the TC-RPPO held remotely in November 2021 and February 2022.

4 HARMONIZATION OF REGIONAL SPS POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

4.1. Under the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures Project, a component of the 11th European Development Fund (EDF), 11th EDF Project, and with the support of IICA (the executing agency), CAHFSA led the development of a Regional Agricultural Health and Food Safety Policy and Action Plan and a 'National AHFS Policy Framework'. The draft documents have been validated by the member States and will now be submitted for approval to the Regional Council on Trade and Economic Development.

4.2. Also completed and subject to approval is a Regional Policy on the Movement of Animals and Animal Products and Protocol Governing CARICOM Control, Analysis and Approval Procedures for Trade in Animals and Animal Products.

4.3. Also, under the 11th EDF project, CAHFSA is collaborating with IICA to support improvements of the SPS regulatory framework in the CARIFORUM member States. This project component aims to upgrade select SPS legislation to meet international standards, improve coordination that contributes to effective and efficient SPS control systems, and strengthen the policy framework that guides processes and plans to harmonise AHFS systems across the Caribbean Region.

4.4. With the support of the Caribbean Development Bank, CAHFSA has completed the development of 19 Commodity-Specific SPS Guidelines. It is expected that these guidelines will enhance the framework for intra-regional trade in agricultural commodities among member Countries.

5 CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES

5.1. CAHFSA is coordinating the application of the IPPC PCE tool in the CARICOM Region. The project began in 2020 under a Letter of Agreement (LOA) with the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Sub-Regional Office for the Caribbean and continues in one member State. CAHFSA will use the results for the application of the PCE to develop a list of regional SPS capacity building needs.

5.2. CAHFSA has completed the first phase in piloting the first STDF P-IMA online course under an STDF project preparation grant. The course saw the training of officials from SPS authorities within the region as P-IMA Facilitators. The next phase of the project will involve the application of the P-IMA tool in four CARICOM member States.

5.3. In collaboration with COLEACP, CAHFSA continues with the pilot application of the COLEACP Rapid SPS Assessment tool in Suriname. The COLEACP Rapid SPS Assessment Tool (R-SAT) provides a practical, step-by-step guide for ACP countries to assess their national sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) systems to strengthen them in line with international standards and regulations. The aim is to develop a national priority action plan to enhance SPS systems, firmly based on a shared strategic vision agreed upon by all stakeholders.

5.4. On 23 March 2022, CAHFSA collaborated with the COLEACP to organize an e-meeting on the PRA process in ACP countries, titled "tools, implications and challenges". During the session, NPPOs from ACP countries report on their experience in implementing PRA.

5.5. CAHFSA has also collaborated with the COLEACP to deliver a 4-week training course for CAHFSA members on the Organization of Official Control. The training, which ran from 26 April to 22 May 2022, aimed, among other things, to improve participants' understanding of the principles and requirements of an official control policy with regard to the SPS Agreement and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).
